

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :
 :
THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF THE: NTSB Accident No.
COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001
OCTOBER 1, 2015 :
 :
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INTERVIEW OF: OS1 [REDACTED]

Tuesday,
October 13, 2015

USCG Seventh District Command Center
Miami, Florida

BEFORE:

JON FURUKAWA, NTSB
DENNIS BRYSON, ABS
PATTY FINSTERBUSCH, TOTE Services
PAUL WEBB, U.S. Coast Guard

PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE INTERVIEWEE:

CDR [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard JAG Corps

This transcript was produced from audio
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR

TAKEN ON

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
5	4	Here since 2010.	Here since 2012
11	20	Just making broadcasts out in the bind seeing if they	Just making broadcasts out in the blind seeing if they
14	12	Finished our pass-on, I went home and slept.	Finished our pass-down, I went home and slept.
16	3	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
17	6	U.S. Navy PA	U.S. Navy P-8
17	23	Gitmo	GTMO
18	5	Gitmo	GTMO
22	22	There as a conference call	There was a conference call
27	1	Lieutenant [REDACTED]	Lieutenant [REDACTED]
30	12	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED.

Initials

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

03 DEC 2015

Date

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. FURUKAWA: It is Tuesday, the 13th of
3 October 2015. The time is 1701. And we're here at the
4 U.S. Coast Guard, District Seven Command Center in
5 Miami, Florida, to interview Operations Specialist
6 First Class [REDACTED]

7 He was a Command Duty Officer during the
8 time of the accident. And we'll go around the room for
9 our transcriber.

10 My name is John Furukawa. I'm with the
11 NTSB. And I'm the Group Chairman for the Survival
12 Factors Group.

13 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Patricia Finsterbusch,
14 TOTE Services, member of the Survival Factors Group.

15 MR. BRYSON: Dennis Bryson, ABS Member of
16 the Survival Factors Group.

17 MR. WEBB: Paul Webb, U.S. Coast Guard.
18 Member of the Survival Factors Group.

19 CDR [REDACTED] Commander [REDACTED] CG JAG.
20 Representative of OS1 [REDACTED]

21 OS1 [REDACTED] And Operations Specialist First
22 Class, [REDACTED] I'm with the U.S. Coast Guard,
23 Seventh District Command Center. I'm a command duty
24 officer.

25 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And let's see, so

1 [REDACTED] you're -- you know that you're being taped?

2 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: That's I'm recording. Okay.

4 And your primary duty is?

5 OS1 [REDACTED] Command Duty Officer.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: And your secondary duty is?

7 OS1 [REDACTED] I will sometimes rotate between
8 Search and Rescue Duty Officer and Law Enforcement Duty
9 Officer. But primarily Command Duty Officer now.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And you have a -- as a
11 day worker, you're -- what duties do you have?

12 OS1 [REDACTED] My day working days are few and
13 far between as primarily I stand watch. But when I'm
14 here day working, it's mainly taking care of
15 administrative duties, mandated training, various
16 taskers that I might get from the Command.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, the Command Center
18 Assist Team, is that a --

19 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes. Command Center Assist
20 Visit Team.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Assist Visit Team. Okay.

22 And --

23 MR. WEBB: How many of those do you do a
24 year?

25 OS1 [REDACTED] It depends because it, you

1 know, we did four last year, so. And I think we'll do
2 probably two this -- we're actually doing District
3 Eleven this year as well, so.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

5 OS1 [REDACTED] And then they're going to come
6 over and do us.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. [REDACTED] how old are you?

8 OS1 [REDACTED] I'm 34 years old.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And how long have you
10 been in the Coast Guard?

11 OS1 [REDACTED] Ten and a half years.

12 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And what kind of --
13 what's your experience with the Coast Guard in those
14 ten and a half years?

15 OS1 [REDACTED] So, after basic training and A
16 school, for Operations Specialist Third Class, I was
17 stationed onboard the Coast Guard Cutter Confidence out
18 of Port Canaveral. I did a three year tour there
19 working in the combat information center and radio
20 room.

21 After there I got orders to sector
22 Houston/Galveston where I was a communications watch
23 stander, a situation unit watch stander. And then
24 finally in my last years there, I was an Operations
25 Unit Controller. So, basically dealing with search and

1 rescue and law enforcement primarily.

2 Following that, I received my orders here to
3 the Seventh District Command Center. And I've been
4 here since 2010.

5 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So you've been here
6 for two years. How long have --

7 OS1 [REDACTED] Oh yes. I'm over three years
8 now.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: Three years. Okay. And how
10 long were you at Sector Houston/Galveston?

11 OS1 [REDACTED] That was a four year tour. So
12 that was 2008 to 2012.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: And the Confidence?

14 OS1 [REDACTED] Confidence was 2005 to 2008.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Three years.

16 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay. And for this
18 accident, let's see, starting from October 1, what was
19 your involvement with this accident?

20 OS1 [REDACTED] So, I first became aware of it
21 when I came in to relieve the watch on October 1, that
22 evening. I came in around 1730 and did my watch to
23 watch inventory.

24 And then we began our pass down at 1800 as
25 we always do. And I was -- received the initial brief

1 on the incident.

2 And then we proceeded to stand our watch
3 from there on the first night.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And that was as
5 Command Duty Officer --

6 OS1 [REDACTED] Correct.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: For the 1800 to 0600.

8 OS1 [REDACTED] That's right.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: And as we discussed before,
10 correct me if I'm wrong, the 1st and the 2nd of
11 October, it was CDO 1800 to 0600.

12 OS1 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: And then the 6th and 7th of
14 October is also CDO at the same times, 1800 to 0600.

15 OS1 [REDACTED] That's right.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Right. Okay. Okay. Can you
17 tell us about your watch on October 1?

18 OS1 [REDACTED] October 1, yes. So, we were
19 aware that there was the loss of communications with
20 the ship. That they were -- we believed that they had
21 been in close proximity to the eye of the storm.

22 We knew that they had been experiencing
23 difficulty. Were listing 15 degrees. That they had
24 been taking on some water and were disabled.

25 I know that the initial report had come

1 through the Lantarea Area Command Center via INMARSAT-
2 C. I also know that there was one 406 megahertz EPIRB
3 distress alert unlocated that was received. And no
4 further updates have been received.

5 And there have been some communication from
6 TOTE via email reporting the issues to us. I know that
7 obviously at that time because of the storm we weren't
8 able to dispatch any assets immediately to the area.

9 And I know we had done some communications
10 searches attempting to make call outs I believe that
11 evening from the Air Force Hurricane Hunter aircraft.
12 But they had been unsuccessful.

13 We did have some other cases going on that
14 night as well. We had a 212-foot cargo ship, the
15 Minouche, which is about 40 nautical miles south of GI
16 that had sent out some distress alerts.

17 We learned that they had a severe list of
18 about 30 degrees. And they were making preparations to
19 abandon ship, which they eventually did. I think they
20 were catching some outer bands from the storm and they
21 were in some pretty nasty weather.

22 And we did some advance search and rescue
23 planning and some operational risk management
24 discussions with our forward deployed aircraft down
25 there in Great Inagua as well as the cutter Northland

1 who was operating in the Windward Pass. And ended up
2 diverting both of them to affect rescue on the crew of
3 12, which they did.

4 MR. WEBB: Which cutter?

5 OS1 [REDACTED] The Northland.

6 MR. WEBB: Okay.

7 OS1 [REDACTED] We also at the same time had a
8 medevac off of I believe it was the Carnival Liberty.
9 There was an elderly gentleman, U.S. citizen, who we
10 had been notified of earlier in the day had suffered a
11 stroke.

12 But, at the time -- and I wasn't on watch
13 for this. But at the time they were pretty -- I think
14 they were in the old Bahama Channel. And they were
15 pretty well out of range of any of our aircraft. And
16 the medevac was not recommended.

17 However, as they proceeded closer to Miami,
18 it was believed by the medical people that he had
19 suffered a second cardiac incident. And his condition
20 had deteriorated.

21 At that point the ship was about 60 nautical
22 miles southeast of Miami. They requested medevac
23 again. And we did coordinate that medevac with MH 65
24 at Air Station Miami. And he was medevaced to Jackson
25 Memorial Ryder Trauma Center.

1 So, that was another case we worked. Those
2 are the two other cases beyond the El Faro that stick
3 out in my mind from the first night.

4 MR. WEBB: A significant night.

5 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: How do you spell Minouche?

7 OS1 [REDACTED] Mike, India, November, Oscar,
8 Uniform, Charlie, Hotel, Echo. Bolivian flag.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: Which cases were you actively
10 running? Did you have a second OU running any of your
11 cases? Or was it just you and your OU?

12 OS1 [REDACTED] No, sir. It was myself and
13 Petty Officer [REDACTED] Operations Unit Search and
14 Rescue.

15 MR. WEBB: Okay. So which cases did you
16 focus on?

17 OS1 [REDACTED] We focus on all the cases.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: I thought the --

19 OS1 [REDACTED] It's a team effort.

20 MR. FURUKAWA: I thought you might split it
21 up between.

22 OS1 [REDACTED] No, we don't split it up. It's
23 a collaborative effort between myself and the OU.

24 MR. FURUKAWA: So, did you get involved with
25 any of the SAR Ops planning or anything for the El

1 Faro?

2 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, I did. At that point, I
3 don't -- on the first night, I don't recall us doing
4 any actual SAR Ops planning because we weren't able to
5 dispatch any assets due to the on scene weather.

6 The majority of the efforts that were
7 involved that night, were coordinating with the Air
8 Force for communications searches. Issuing enhanced
9 group calling out of INMARSAT-C. Data pushes out to
10 that ocean area to see if anyone responded.

11 But, any search and rescue planning that's
12 done in SAR Ops is always a collaborative effort
13 between the CDO and the OU. So, the CDO is required to
14 review all those search plans for accuracy.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: So were you involved with
16 trying to identify the aircraft, the Air Force aircraft
17 that you're going to fly? The Hurricane Hunters?

18 OS1 [REDACTED] Trying to identify them?

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Or requesting them?

20 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

22 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, I believe that
23 coordination with the Air Force had already taken place
24 during the day.

25 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

1 OS1 [REDACTED] By the time I got there, that
2 coordination had already been taken care of. I
3 actually --

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Were they on scene?

5 OS1 [REDACTED] They were on scene. I actually
6 spoke to a Major from the Air Force that was onboard
7 the aircraft. He called directly into the Command
8 Center and I spoke to him.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: Do you know if they had any
10 radar search capability? Or was it all just broadcast?

11 OS1 [REDACTED] I know that they were doing
12 call-outs. I believe that he stated that they, you
13 know, they do have radar search capabilities. I'm not
14 100 percent sure on that.

15 But, I do vaguely recall him mentioning that
16 because of the storm they weren't able to pick up any
17 radar contacts. They could also on -- they had a deck
18 at 10 thousand feet, so. They were severely limited.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So basically they were
20 just making broadcasts out in the bind seeing if they
21 could raise them?

22 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: Did they talk to any other
24 vessels while they were broadcasting?

25 OS1 [REDACTED] I don't recall them speaking to

1 any other vessels, no.

2 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Patty Finsterbusch from
3 TOTE Services. So, the first night there real -- there
4 was no confirmation of any kind that there was a ship
5 down there?

6 OS1 [REDACTED] Your ship?

7 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Any --

8 CDR [REDACTED] I think it's a -- I object to
9 the question.

10 MR. FINSTERBUSCH: Okay. That's fine.

11 CDR [REDACTED] I guess I don't know what you're
12 asking.

13 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: So the -- let me see how
14 to put it. I guess, from 1800 until 0600, we were
15 basically in -- it was in the dark. So, the only thing
16 that was up working was the Hurricane Hunter?

17 OS1 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

18 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: So -- and they never
19 received any kind of re -- right, so you said that. So
20 they received no call back or anything? And there was
21 no other -- we'll leave it there.

22 I mean, I have one little note in here. And
23 I was just trying to figure out --

24 CDR [REDACTED] I think you got a question in
25 there.

1 MR. BRYSON: That -- if the Hurricane Hunter
2 was using radar to --

3 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: I guess that's --

4 MR. BRYSON: Ping on some -- on a ship, like
5 a -- could they tell if there was a ship down below
6 using radar? Was that what you want to say?

7 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Let me think.

8 MR. WEBB: All right. While she's thinking,
9 this is Paul Webb again. Overnight, were you looking
10 at AIS at all? Seeing if there's any other targets
11 popping up on AIS?

12 OS1 [REDACTED] I don't recall. I don't recall
13 specifically if we had looked on AIS. I'm sure -- we
14 always -- it's policy that we have what's called CG1
15 view-up.

16 MR. WEBB: Um-hum.

17 OS1 [REDACTED] Which, I'm sure you're familiar
18 with it.

19 MR. WEBB: Yes.

20 OS1 [REDACTED] And that will push AIS tracks
21 and things of that nature. So, I'm certain that that
22 was looked at.

23 MR. BRYSON: Okay. So on -- Dennis Bryson
24 with ABS. So, on the first night, on October 1, you
25 were still looking for a vessel?

1 OS1 [REDACTED] Absolutely.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: So -- all right. So, the
3 first night you were kind of helpless because you were
4 dealing with the winds and the storm. And you can't
5 get assets out there.

6 OS1 [REDACTED] Right.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: And that went into the second
8 day. Correct? That the weather was still bad, so bad
9 that they could not do an alpha search?

10 OS1 [REDACTED] I wasn't present for Friday
11 during the day. After I got relieved at 6:30 or 0600
12 and we finished our pass-on, I went home and slept.

13 So I can't speak to specifically what
14 happened during the day on Friday. I know when I came
15 back in, the weather was still such that we couldn't
16 get any assets out there.

17 However, we had begun, and they had begun
18 during the day, which rolled over. And there was some
19 overlap with everybody getting involved in the search
20 planning. We were hoping that Saturday morning would
21 be the day that the storm finally started to move.

22 I think some of the weather models were
23 showing it starting to move north possibly Saturday
24 morning. We thought we may be able to get some assets
25 in there and be able to begin hitting it with some of

1 our own assets on Saturday morning.

2 But yes, to my knowledge Friday, the weather
3 was still prohibitive to us getting any assets in there
4 safely.

5 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So that night watch
6 then -- it's the night watch of the 2nd --

7 OS1 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

8 MR. FURUKAWA: Going into the 3rd, right?

9 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: That Saturday. And that was
11 your watch too, right?

12 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: And so, were you able to --
14 were you anticipating a break that you were doing the
15 SAR Ops planning for the -- that morning?

16 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes. For Saturday morning.
17 Saturday morning. That search planning had begun the
18 afternoon of that Friday. At least discussions about
19 what we wanted specifically. What the Command wanted.

20 I know there was a lot of people putting
21 their heads together on kind of the force lay down.
22 Here's what we have. Here's the support that we've
23 been able to drum up as far as Coast Guard aircraft and
24 outside agencies, other DoD agencies, the Air Force,
25 the Navy.

1 Here's how we want to lay them down. And
2 then these are the kind of the areas that we want to
3 search in. And then myself and my OU, [REDACTED]
4 went ahead and did that search planning Friday evening.

5 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. But that search
6 planning and being a part of it, what objects besides
7 the ship did you select?

8 OS1 [REDACTED] So we selected, besides the
9 ship, we selected a lifeboat and a life raft. At that
10 point we did not put in PIW.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: And why was that?

12 OS1 [REDACTED] We didn't have anything
13 indicating at that point, based on what we knew, that
14 the ship had gone down. So we had no reason to believe
15 that we would have persons in the water.

16 Initially, I mean, unless we have solid
17 information that we've lost the ship and we've got
18 people in the water, usually we like to focus our
19 initial search efforts on the larger search objects.
20 And then go from there if nothing is located.

21 So yes, so initially we had those three
22 larger search objects, lifeboat, life raft and the
23 ship.

24 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And so you completed
25 the SAR Ops and had a search plan for how many SRUs?

1 OS1 [REDACTED] Let's see, so we had --
2 ultimately what we ended up, what we left the day watch
3 with on Saturday when they came in, was a plan for a
4 Clearwater C130, an Elizabeth City C130 that was
5 operating out of Air Station Clearwater. A fleet
6 forces, a U.S. Navy PA. And I believe a C130 out of
7 Patrick Air Force Base.

8 In addition to that, we also had one of the
9 Air Station Clearwater MH60 forward deployed to Great
10 Inagua also planned. So, five.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: What was the one before
12 Patrick? What -- the aircraft before Patrick Air Force
13 Base C130.

14 OS1 [REDACTED] The Navy P8.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Navy P8, okay.

16 MR. BRYSON: That was U.S. Fleet Forces
17 Command?

18 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: And did you assign anything,
20 the cutters? Or they weren't going to be on scene yet?

21 OS1 [REDACTED] We didn't have -- initially the
22 Northland on Thursday had been tasked to refuel in
23 Gitmo on Friday morning. And then start working their
24 way as best they could considering the on scene weather
25 conditions and their capabilities.

1 However, I spoke to the Minouche case
2 before, which took place on Thursday night into Friday
3 morning. They were the closest available surface
4 asset. So they were diverted, which actually delayed
5 them getting into Gitmo to refuel.

6 So, no, at that time we didn't have any
7 surface assets available.

8 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So the Minouche
9 dropped off -- or the Northland dropped off the
10 Minouche survivors in Gitmo when they refueled?

11 OS1 [REDACTED] No, sir. The Minouche did not
12 -- or the Northland did not recover any survivors. All
13 survivors were recovered by the Great Inagua MH60.

14 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And this is for the
15 first day still, right?

16 OS1 [REDACTED] This was for the first day.
17 Yes, sir.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: Any more questions for the
19 first day?

20 MR. WEBB: I hop to the second day.

21 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, we --

22 MR. WEBB: With the search planning, that
23 was all second day.

24 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, that was all the -- that
25 was all Friday night into Saturday morning.

1 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, Saturday morning, okay.

2 MR. BRYSON: Yes, which still is first
3 watch.

4 OS1 [REDACTED] That was my second.

5 MR. WEBB: That was the second.

6 OS1 [REDACTED] That was my second watch.

7 MR. WEBB: The search planning part.

8 MR. BRYSON: Oh, yes, yes.

9 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. Because we weren't
10 able to do any search planning because --

11 MR. WEBB: Yes, there was no search planning
12 done the first night because they were in --

13 MR. BRYSON: Oh, that's right.

14 MR. WEBB: Hurricane lock, I guess is how
15 you --

16 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

17 MR. WEBB: Would put it.

18 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

19 MR. WEBB: You can't do anything.

20 MR. BRYSON: Okay.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Did search planning start on
22 your watch on the second night? Second day?

23 OS1 [REDACTED] The actual physical act of
24 going in and developing the plans inside SAR Ops, yes.
25 Yes, it did.

1 MR. WEBB: On your second --

2 MR. FURUKAWA: On your second watch?

3 OS1 [REDACTED] On my second watch. On the
4 night of the 2nd, Friday night into Saturday morning.

5 MR. FURUKAWA: And that was because the
6 weather had calmed down a bit where the planes could go
7 below?

8 OS1 [REDACTED] We weren't sure what kind of
9 weather they would encounter when they got on scene.
10 But we were hopeful and we were anxious to get out
11 there as soon as possible on Saturday morning.

12 We weren't sure that they would be able to
13 get there. But we were anxious to make every effort
14 possible should the weather permit our assets to get on
15 scene Saturday morning.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And the H60 that was
17 rescuing the survivors off the Minouche that was a
18 nighttime rescue?

19 OS1 [REDACTED] That was a nighttime rescue.
20 Yes, sir.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And that was in the
22 area of the storm?

23 OS1 [REDACTED] I believe they were seeing some
24 outer bands. But I can't confirm that. The on scene
25 weather that was reported, I think 15 foot seas. I

1 think winds in the area of 30 knots.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

3 OS1 [REDACTED] That evening into Friday
4 morning for the Minouche case.

5 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay. Can you tell us
6 -- talk to us about your next set of watches? The
7 Tuesday/Wednesday from -- the 6th and 7th of October?

8 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. So, obviously three
9 of the days that the case was going on I guess I
10 learned when I came back in that that Saturday morning,
11 that our assets had gone out the searches that myself
12 and Petty Officer [REDACTED] had planned.

13 They hadn't been able to get very close to
14 the search area. However, Sunday turned out to be the
15 day that the weather -- the storm had pushed far enough
16 north to allow us to get kind of a full-blown search.

17 I understood that they had located debris.
18 Large -- two large debris fields. I understand that
19 there was one individual that was located, deceased in
20 a survival suit, that had not been recovered.

21 I understood that there had been several
22 survival craft located, confirmed from the ship. And I
23 understood that we were at this point searching for
24 persons in the water. And that we would continue the
25 search until further notified.

1 So, my watch -- myself and my watch, which
2 was also Petty Officer [REDACTED] again, was tasked with
3 again planning the first light searches for the
4 following day, which would have been Wednesday.

5 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

6 OS1 [REDACTED] So, also continuing to provide
7 search patterns for -- at that point we had three
8 cutters on scene. We had the Cutter Northland, the
9 Cutter Resolute, and the fast response Cutter Sexton on
10 scene.

11 So we were providing them with search
12 patterns. We were receiving updates and documenting
13 any debris that was located either by our assets or the
14 three tugs that were contracted by TOTE.

15 And then yes, planning for the searches for
16 the next day.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Was there discussions
18 on that first night about planning for a suspension?

19 OS1 [REDACTED] I know that we had sent, I
20 believe it was our Chief of Staff up to Jacksonville.
21 And I know that there had been -- I was present for
22 that, but I believe there as a conference call with the
23 families on Tuesday evening I believe.

24 So, I know that usually before suspension,
25 the families are required to receive 24 hours notice

1 prior to, of our intentions. So, I figured if they
2 were having that conference call, it was being
3 considered.

4 But, obviously that didn't change from the
5 Command Duty Officer and search and rescue planning
6 perspective, that didn't change anything for us.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: And that's Tuesday night.
8 Any other Tuesday night questions? Patty?

9 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No, I don't have any
10 Tuesday night questions.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: All right. We'll go to
12 Wednesday night, which would have been your last watch,
13 right?

14 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: So, what did you -- what
16 happened on that watch?

17 OS1 [REDACTED] So I came in. I knew that our
18 command had -- our senior staff had gone up to
19 Jacksonville to give the suspension brief to the next
20 of kin and to the folks from TOTE.

21 I know that our intentions were to keep the
22 Cutters on scene, the three Cutters that I mentioned
23 before, the Northland, the Resolute and the Sexton,
24 until sunset. And I know that we had one aircraft
25 remaining on the scene, which I believe was the Air

1 Station Elizabeth City C130, that was going to go until
2 sunset as well.

3 And then that would be the final search
4 effort as the case had been suspended. At 1900, we got
5 the senior staff on the phone and did the official act
6 of search suspension brief with the Admiral, the Chief
7 of Response. And we received permission to officially
8 suspend the active search.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: And that 1900 that was
10 suspended?

11 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

12 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. All right. Do you
13 remember your total number of sorties?

14 OS1 [REDACTED] I know it was in the next of
15 kin and the final command page that I sent out. But
16 off the top of my head I --

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

18 OS1 [REDACTED] Fifty maybe. I can't remember
19 the exact numbers. There were a lot of numbers that
20 were flying around.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Just some general and a --
22 how many phone calls say per hour during -- every night
23 you were there were you getting from just everybody?
24 And how were those being handled?

25 CDR [REDACTED] On the third night?

1 MR. FURUKAWA: And basically through the
2 whole thing? Just the average? I'm just trying to
3 show, you know, besides what these guys were trying to
4 think, just the other inputs and things that they had
5 to deal with.

6 You know, how busy was the phone traffic?

7 OS1 [REDACTED] Specifically in regards to this
8 case?

9 MR. FURUKAWA: Yes.

10 OS1 [REDACTED] You know, at night it wasn't
11 incredibly busy with phone calls. We were doing our
12 four hour check-ins with the ICP and the folks from
13 TOTE.

14 They would call in and ask if there were any
15 updates. Usually at night there wasn't. Excuse me, I
16 would provide them with what we were planning and what
17 our intentions were for the next day. Detail what
18 aircraft we had, what surface assets we had, when we
19 expected them to be out there and for how long.

20 But aside from that, I think the first night
21 I might have received -- I think I received one or two
22 calls from some family members. And then beyond that
23 really, the only calls that we were getting were just
24 our regular four hour check-ins with the ICP.

25 It wasn't a very high volume of calls in

1 regards to this case on the night watches. I can't
2 speak for the middle of the case, those three days in
3 the middle of the case that I wasn't there. I was on
4 liberty.

5 So I think in the beginning, you know, I was
6 there for when we weren't able to get any assets out
7 there just yet. So it hadn't quite ramped up to, you
8 know, the full on -- you know, full-blown search effort
9 yet.

10 And then I was there kind of at -- towards
11 the tail end of it. So, I can't speak for the middle
12 of the case. But when I was there, it wasn't too heavy
13 of a volume of calls for that particular case.

14 MR. FURUKAWA: All right. Anybody else?
15 Patty?

16 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No, I'm good.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. We're at wrap this.
18 Any questions at all to wrap it up?

19 MR. BRYSON: I think we wrap it.

20 CDR [REDACTED] I got a point of clarification
21 real quick if you don't mind. You testi -- not
22 testified. You stated earlier that you op -- you took
23 action on that -- as the SAR cases as a team.

24 And I think the question was from Paul as to
25 whether it was divided up as to one person doing one

1 case and others doing others. However, Lieutenant [REDACTED]
2 and others have said, testified or stated that on
3 larger cases when it's busy, someone will be dedicated
4 to a particular case.

5 Is there -- was it different between the day
6 and then night? Or can you just clarify what that
7 answer was?

8 OS1 [REDACTED] Thank you, sir. That's right.
9 So, the first two nights, I was the CDO. And there was
10 no separate watch. There may have been during the day
11 on Friday. I don't know.

12 At night I can tell you for the 1st and the
13 2nd, it was myself and Petty Officer [REDACTED] that were
14 overseeing not only the El Faro case, but all the other
15 search and rescue cases that were going on in the AOR.
16 I was also responsible for supervising law enforcement.

17 Now on the last two nights, the 6th and the
18 7th, there was a separate CDO there. And since I had
19 been involved in the case on the 1st and the 2nd, I
20 said I'll handle everything that has to do with El
21 Faro, and you handle everything else.

22 So myself and Petty Officer [REDACTED] those
23 last two nights, were able to focus specifically on the
24 El Faro case.

25 CDR [REDACTED] Um-hum.

1 OS1 [REDACTED] But, I was understanding that
2 when you were asking the question if, you know, like
3 the CDO would take one --

4 MR. WEBB: Right. Right.

5 OS1 [REDACTED] Search and rescue case.
6 Somebody take another. And that's, you know.

7 MR. WEBB: Yes. Because sometimes you -- it
8 does happen though.

9 OS1 [REDACTED] Sure.

10 MR. WEBB: You say okay, there are like two
11 or three medevacs or something going on. And you say
12 okay, I'm going to take these two, you take -- work on
13 that one. And then kind of split it like that.

14 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes.

15 MR. WEBB: But that's a good point --

16 OS1 [REDACTED] Yes.

17 MR. WEBB: That they had augmented the watch
18 with the second OU and those.

19 OS1 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

20 MR. WEBB: All right.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: And the second night, the sec
22 -- or the second set of watches, besides -- see, during
23 the daytime they had a second OU.

24 OS1 [REDACTED] Um-hum.

25 MR. FURUKAWA: But at nighttime, for the

1 second set of watches, it was one OU, but the --

2 OS1 [REDACTED] It was just myself and Petty
3 Officer [REDACTED]

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

5 OS1 [REDACTED] For -- that were working the
6 search and rescue case -- cases.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: And there was another CDO and
8 another OU that were doing everything else?

9 OS1 [REDACTED] Not on the second night, no.
10 On the 1st and the 2nd, October 1 and October 2 night
11 watch, which I was there for, it was just myself and
12 Petty Officer [REDACTED]

13 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And the next group of
14 watches?

15 OS1 [REDACTED] The 6th and the 7th, there was
16 -- myself and Petty Officer [REDACTED] just focusing on
17 the El Faro case. And then there was an additional OU
18 search and rescue and CDO to focus on the other things.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

20 OS1 [REDACTED] You're welcome.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Let's see, anything?
22 Anything else further?

23 (No response)

24 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay. So, the end of
25 the interview. Is there anything you'd like to add or

1 change?

2 OS1 [REDACTED] No, sir.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Is there any question
4 we should have asked but did not?

5 OS1 [REDACTED] No, sir.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And this is the -- the
7 one you get to answer. Do you have any suggestions for
8 preventing a recurrence of this type of accident?

9 OS1 [REDACTED] No, sir. I don't.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And is there anybody
11 else that we should interview?

12 OS1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Petty Officer
13 [REDACTED] I believe is coming in tomorrow or Thursday to
14 be interviewed.

15 CDR [REDACTED] Thursday.

16 OS1 [REDACTED] So, that would be my
17 suggestion.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: And what's he's -- he's an
19 OS1 or 2?

20 OS1 [REDACTED] He's an OS2.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: OS2, okay. Okay, and let's
22 see. And it is 1736. We're ending the interview with
23 OS1 [REDACTED]

24 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
25 off the record at 5:36 p.m.)

<p>A</p> <p>abandon 7:19</p> <p>able 7:8 10:4 11:16 14:24,25 15:13,23 19:10 20:12 21:13 26:6 27:23</p> <p>above-entitled 30:24</p> <p>ABS 1:17 2:15 13:24</p> <p>Absolutely 14:1</p> <p>accident 1:4 2:8 5:18 5:19 30:8</p> <p>accuracy 10:14</p> <p>act 19:23 24:5</p> <p>action 26:23</p> <p>active 24:8</p> <p>actively 9:9</p> <p>actual 10:4 19:23</p> <p>add 29:25</p> <p>addition 17:8</p> <p>additional 29:17</p> <p>administrative 3:15</p> <p>Admiral 24:6</p> <p>advance 7:22</p> <p>affect 8:2</p> <p>afternoon 15:18</p> <p>agencies 15:24,24</p> <p>ahead 16:4</p> <p>Air 7:11 8:24 10:7,16,23 11:6 15:24 17:5,7,9 17:12 23:25</p> <p>aircraft 7:11,24 8:15 10:16,16 11:7 15:23 17:12 23:24 25:18</p> <p>AIS 13:10,11,13,20</p> <p>alert 7:3</p> <p>alerts 7:16</p> <p>allow 21:16</p> <p>alpha 14:9</p> <p>answer 27:7 30:7</p> <p>anticipating 15:14</p> <p>anxious 20:10,13</p> <p>anybody 26:14 30:10</p> <p>AOR 27:15</p> <p>area 7:1,8 10:10 20:22 21:1,14</p> <p>areas 16:2</p> <p>aside 25:20</p> <p>asked 30:4</p> <p>asking 12:12 28:2</p> <p>asset 18:4</p> <p>assets 7:8 10:5 14:5,16 14:24 15:1,3 18:7 20:14 21:11 22:13 25:18 26:6</p> <p>assign 17:19</p> <p>Assist 3:18,19,21</p> <p>attempting 7:10</p> <p>audio 1:23</p>	<p>augmented 28:17</p> <p>available 18:3,7</p> <p>average 25:2</p> <p>aware 5:20 6:19</p> <p>B</p> <p>back 12:20 14:15 21:10</p> <p>bad 14:8,8</p> <p>Bahama 8:14</p> <p>BAHAMAS 1:4</p> <p>bands 7:20 20:24</p> <p>Base 17:7,13</p> <p>based 16:13</p> <p>basic 4:15</p> <p>basically 4:25 11:19 12:15 25:1</p> <p>began 5:24</p> <p>beginning 26:5</p> <p>begun 14:17,17 15:17</p> <p>BEHALF 1:20</p> <p>believe 7:10 8:8 10:22 11:12 16:14 17:6 20:23 22:20,22,23 23:25 30:13</p> <p>believed 6:20 8:18</p> <p>best 17:24</p> <p>beyond 9:2 25:22</p> <p>bind 11:20</p> <p>bit 20:6</p> <p>Board 1:1,24</p> <p>Bolivian 9:8</p> <p>break 15:14</p> <p>brief 5:25 23:19 24:6</p> <p>broadcast 11:10</p> <p>broadcasting 11:24</p> <p>broadcasts 11:20</p> <p>Bryson 1:17 2:15,15 13:1,4,23,23 17:16 19:2,8,13,20 26:19</p> <p>busy 25:6,11 27:3</p> <p>C</p> <p>C 7:2</p> <p>C130 17:4,4,6,13 24:1</p> <p>call 7:10 12:20 22:22 23:2 25:14</p> <p>call-outs 11:12</p> <p>called 11:7 13:14</p> <p>calling 10:9</p> <p>calls 24:22 25:11,22,23 25:25 26:13</p> <p>calmed 20:6</p> <p>Canaveral 4:18</p> <p>capabilities 11:13 17:25</p> <p>capability 11:10</p> <p>cardiac 8:19</p> <p>care 3:14 11:2</p>	<p>cargo 7:14</p> <p>Carnival 8:8</p> <p>case 9:1 18:1 21:4,9 24:4 25:8 26:1,2,3,12 26:13 27:1,4,14,19,24 28:5 29:6,17</p> <p>cases 7:13 9:2,9,11,15 9:17 26:23 27:3,15 29:6</p> <p>catching 7:20</p> <p>CDO 6:11,14 10:13,13 27:9,18 28:3 29:7,18</p> <p>CDR 1:21 2:19 12:8,11 12:24 24:25 26:20 27:25 30:15</p> <p>center 1:11 2:4,23 3:17 3:19 4:19 5:3 7:1 8:25 11:8</p> <p>certain 13:21</p> <p>CG 2:19</p> <p>CG1 13:14</p> <p>Chairman 2:11</p> <p>change 23:4,6 30:1</p> <p>Channel 8:14</p> <p>Charlie 9:8</p> <p>check-ins 25:12,24</p> <p>Chief 22:20 24:6 1:21 2:19</p> <p>citizen 8:9</p> <p>City 17:4 24:1</p> <p>clarification 26:20</p> <p>clarify 27:6</p> <p>Class 2:6,22 4:16</p> <p>Clearwater 17:4,5,9</p> <p>close 6:21 21:13</p> <p>closer 8:17</p> <p>closest 18:3</p> <p>Coast 1:4,18,21 2:4,17 2:22 4:10,13,17 15:23</p> <p>collaborative 9:23 10:12</p> <p>combat 4:19</p> <p>come 4:5 6:25</p> <p>coming 30:13</p> <p>command 1:11 2:4,7,23 2:23 3:5,9,16,17,19 5:3 6:5 7:1 11:7 15:19 17:17 23:5,18 24:15</p> <p>Commander 2:19</p> <p>communication 7:5</p> <p>communications 4:22 6:19 7:9 10:8</p> <p>completed 16:24</p> <p>condition 8:19</p> <p>conditions 17:25</p> <p>conference 22:22 23:2</p> <p>Confidence 4:17 5:13 5:14</p>	<p>confirm 20:24</p> <p>confirmation 12:4</p> <p>confirmed 21:22</p> <p>considered 23:3</p> <p>considering 17:24</p> <p>contacts 11:17</p> <p>continue 21:24</p> <p>continuing 22:6</p> <p>contracted 22:14</p> <p>Controller 4:25</p> <p>coordinate 8:23</p> <p>coordinating 10:7</p> <p>coordination 10:23 11:2</p> <p>Corps 1:21</p> <p>correct 6:6,10 14:8 1:21 2:19,19 12:8,11,24 24:25 26:20 27:25 30:15</p> <p>craft 21:22</p> <p>crew 8:2</p> <p>cutter 4:17 7:25 8:4 22:8,9,9</p> <p>cutters 17:20 22:8 23:22,22</p> <p>D</p> <p>dark 12:15</p> <p>Data 10:9</p> <p>day 3:11,12,14 8:10 10:24 14:8,11,14,18 14:21 17:2 18:15,16 18:19,20,23 19:22 21:15 22:4,16 25:17 27:5,10</p> <p>days 3:12 21:9 26:2</p> <p>daytime 28:23</p> <p>DCA16MM001 1:4</p> <p>deal 25:5</p> <p>dealing 4:25 14:4</p> <p>debris 21:17,18 22:13</p> <p>deceased 21:19</p> <p>deck 11:17</p> <p>dedicated 27:3</p> <p>degrees 6:23 7:18</p> <p>delayed 18:4</p> <p>Dennis 1:17 2:15 13:23</p> <p>depends 3:25</p> <p>deployed 7:24 17:9</p> <p>Detail 25:17</p> <p>deteriorated 8:20</p> <p>developing 19:24</p> <p>different 27:5</p> <p>difficulty 6:23</p> <p>directly 11:7</p> <p>disabled 6:24</p> <p>discussed 6:9</p> <p>discussions 7:24 15:18</p>
--	---	---	---

22:17
dispatch 7:8 10:5
distress 7:3,16
District 1:11 2:4,23 4:2
 5:3
diverted 18:4
diverting 8:2
divided 26:25
documenting 22:12
DoD 15:24
doing 4:2 10:3 11:11
 15:14 25:11 26:25
 27:1 29:8
dropped 18:9,9
drum 15:23
due 10:5
duties 3:11,15
duty 2:7,23 3:4,5,6,8,8
 3:9 6:5 23:5

E

earlier 8:10 26:22
Echo 9:8
effort 9:19,23 10:12
 20:13 24:4 26:8
efforts 10:6 16:19
either 22:13
EI 1:4 9:2,25 27:14,20
 27:24 29:17
elderly 8:9
Eleven 4:3
Elizabeth 17:4 24:1
email 7:6
encounter 20:9
ended 8:1 17:2
enforcement 3:8 5:1
 27:16
enhanced 10:8
EPIRB 7:2
evening 5:22 7:11 16:4
 21:3 22:23
eventually 7:19
everybody 14:19 24:23
exact 24:19
Excuse 25:15
expected 25:19
experience 4:13
experiencing 6:22
eye 6:21

F

Factors 2:12,14,16,18
familiar 13:17
families 22:23,25
family 25:22
far 3:13 15:23 21:15
Faro 1:4 9:2 10:1 27:14
 27:21,24 29:17

fast 22:9
feet 11:18
fields 21:18
Fifty 24:18
figure 12:23
figured 23:1
final 24:3,15
finally 4:24 14:21
fine 12:10
finished 14:12
Finsterbusch 1:18 2:13
 2:13 12:2,2,7,10,13
 12:18 13:3,7 23:9
 26:16
first 2:6,21 5:20 6:3 9:3
 10:3 12:3 13:24 14:3
 18:15,16,19 19:2,12
 22:3,18 25:20 27:9

five 17:10
flag 9:8
fleet 17:5,16
Florida 1:11 2:5
fly 10:17
flying 24:20
focus 9:16,17 16:18
 27:23 29:18
focusing 29:16
folks 23:20 25:12
following 5:2 22:4
foot 20:25
force 7:11 10:8,16,23
 11:6 15:21,24 17:7,12
forces 17:6,16
forward 7:24 17:9
four 4:1 5:11 25:12,24
Friday 14:10,14 15:2,18
 16:4 17:23 18:2,25
 20:4 21:3 27:11
full 26:8
full-blown 21:16 26:8
further 7:4 21:25 29:22
Furukawa 1:17 2:2,10
 2:25 3:3,6,10,17,21
 4:4,7,9,12 5:5,9,13,15
 5:17 6:4,7,9,13,16 9:6
 9:9,18,20,24 10:15,19
 10:21,25 11:4,9,19,23
 14:2,7 15:5,8,10,13
 16:5,11,24 17:11,15
 17:19 18:8,14,18 19:1
 19:21 20:2,5,16,21
 21:2,5 22:5,17 23:7
 23:11,15 24:9,12,17
 24:21 25:1,9 26:14,17
 28:21,25 29:4,7,13,19
 29:21,24 30:3,6,10,18
 30:21

G

general 24:21
gentleman 8:9
getting 14:19 15:3 18:5
 24:23 25:23
GI 7:15
Gitmo 17:23 18:5,10
give 23:19
go 2:8 16:20 20:6 23:11
 24:1
going 4:5 7:13 10:17
 15:8 17:20 19:24 21:9
 24:1 27:15 28:11,12
good 26:16 28:15
Great 7:25 17:9 18:13
group 2:11,12,14,16,18
 10:9 29:13
Guard 1:18,21 2:4,17
 2:22 4:10,13,17 15:23
guess 12:11,14 13:3
 19:14 21:9
guys 25:3

H

H60 20:16
half 4:11,14
 27:1
handle 27:20,21
handled 24:24
happen 28:8
happened 14:14 23:16
head 24:16
heads 15:21
heavy 26:12
helpless 14:3
high 25:25
hitting 14:25
home 14:12
hop 18:20
hopeful 20:10
hoping 14:20
Hotel 9:8
hour 24:22 25:12,24
hours 22:25
Houston/Galveston
 4:22 5:10
Hunter 7:11 12:16 13:1
Hunters 10:17
Hurricane 7:11 10:17
 12:16 13:1 19:14

I

ICP 25:12,24
identify 10:16,18
immediately 7:8
Inagua 7:25 17:10
 18:13
incident 1:4 6:1 8:19

incredibly 25:11
India 9:7
indicating 16:13
individual 21:19
information 4:19 16:17
initial 5:25 6:25 16:19
initially 16:16,21 17:21
INMARSAT 7:1
INMARSAT-C 10:9
inputs 25:4
inside 19:24
intentions 23:1,21
 25:17
interview 1:7 2:5 29:25
 30:11,22
interviewed 30:14
INTERVIEWEE 1:20
inventory 5:23
involved 9:24 10:7,15
 14:19 27:19
involvement 5:19
issues 7:6
Issuing 10:8

J

Jackson 8:24
Jacksonville 22:20
 23:19
JAG 1:21 2:19
 4:7
John 2:10
JON 1:17
 1:7 2:6,22 3:1
 30:23

K

keep 23:21
kin 23:20 24:15
kind 4:12 12:4,19 14:3
 15:21 16:2 20:8 21:16
 26:10 28:13
knew 6:22 16:13 23:17
knots 21:1
know 3:1 4:1 6:25 7:2,6
 7:9 11:9,11,13 12:11
 14:14 15:20 22:19,21
 22:24 23:21,24 24:14
 25:3,6,10 26:5,8,8
 27:11 28:2,6
knowledge 15:2

L

Lantarea 7:1
large 21:18,18
larger 16:19,22 27:3
law 3:8 5:1 27:16
lay 15:21 16:1
learned 7:17 21:10

leave 12:21
left 17:2
let's 2:25 5:18 17:1
29:21 30:21
liberty 8:8 26:4
Lieutenant 27:1
life 16:9,22
lifeboat 16:9,22
light 22:3
limited 11:18
list 7:17
listing 6:23
little 12:22
located 16:20 21:17,19
21:22 22:13
lock 19:14
long 4:9 5:6,10 25:19
looked 13:13,22
looking 13:9,25
loss 6:19
lost 16:17
lot 15:20 24:19

M

M 2:6
Major 11:6
majority 10:6
making 7:18 11:20
management 7:23
mandated 3:15
matter 30:24
mean 12:22 16:16
medevac 8:8,16,22,23
medevaced 8:24
medevacs 28:11
medical 8:18
██████ 1:7 2:6,20,21
2:22 3:2,5,7,12,19,25
4:5,8,11,15 5:7,11,14
5:16,20 6:6,8,12,15
6:18 8:5,7 9:5,7,12,17
9:19,22 10:2,18,20,22
11:1,5,11,22,25 12:6
12:17 13:12,17,20
14:1,6,10 15:7,9,12
15:16 16:8,12 17:1,14
17:18,21 18:11,16,21
18:24 19:4,6,9,16,18
19:23 20:3,8,19,23
21:3,8 22:6,19 23:14
23:17 24:11,14,18
25:7,10 27:8 28:1,5,9
28:14,16,19,24 29:2,5
29:9,15,20 30:2,5,9
30:12,16,20,23
megahertz 7:2
member 2:14,15,18
members 25:22

Memorial 8:25
mentioned 23:22
mentioning 11:15
MH 8:23
MH60 17:9 18:13
Miami 1:11 2:5 8:17,22
8:24
middle 26:2,3,11
Mike 9:7
miles 7:15 8:22
mind 9:3 26:21
Minouche 7:15 9:6 18:1
18:8,10,11 20:17 21:4
models 14:22
morning 14:20,24 15:1
15:15,16,17 17:23
18:3,25 19:1 20:4,11
20:15 21:4,10
move 14:21,23

N

name 2:10
nasty 7:21
National 1:1,24
nature 13:21
nautical 7:15 8:21
Navy 15:25 17:6,14,15
never 12:18
nigh 13:24
night 6:3 7:14 9:3,4
10:3,7 12:3 14:3 15:5
15:6 18:2,25 19:12,22
20:4,4 22:18 23:7,8
23:10,12 24:22,25
25:10,15,20 26:1 27:6
27:12 28:21 29:9,10
nights 27:9,17,23
nighttime 20:18,19
28:25
north 14:23 21:16
Northland 7:25 8:5
17:22 18:9,12 22:8
23:23
note 12:22
notice 22:25
notified 8:10 21:25
November 9:7
NTSB 1:4,17 2:11
number 24:13
numbers 24:19,19

O

object 12:8
objects 16:6,19,22
obviously 7:7 21:8 23:4
ocean 10:10
October 1:5,10 2:3 5:18
5:21 6:11,14,17,18

13:24 21:7 29:10,10
officer 2:7,24 3:5,8,9,9
6:5 9:13 21:12 22:2
23:5 27:13,22 29:3,12
29:16 30:12
official 24:5
officially 24:7
Oh 5:7 19:8,13
okay 2:25 3:3,10,17,21
4:4,7,9,12 5:5,9,17,17
6:4,16,16 8:6 9:15
10:21,25 11:19 12:10
13:23 15:5 16:5,24
17:15 18:8,14 19:1,1
19:20 20:16,21 21:2,5
21:5 22:5,17 24:12,17
26:17 28:10,12 29:4
29:13,19,19,24,24
30:3,6,10,21,21
old 4:7,8 8:14
onboard 4:17 11:6
op 26:22
operating 8:1 17:5
operational 7:23
Operations 2:5,21 4:16
4:24 9:13
Ops 9:25 10:4,12 15:15
16:25 19:24
orders 4:21 5:2
OS1 1:7 2:20,21 3:2,5,7
3:12,19,25 4:5,8,11
4:15 5:7,11,14,16,20
6:6,8,12,15,18 8:5,7
9:5,7,12,17,19,22
10:2,18,20,22 11:1,5
11:11,22,25 12:6,17
13:12,17,20 14:1,6,10
15:7,9,12,16 16:8,12
17:1,14,18,21 18:11
18:16,21,24 19:4,6,9
19:16,18,23 20:3,8,19
20:23 21:3,8 22:6,19
23:14,17 24:11,14,18
25:7,10 27:8 28:1,5,9
28:14,16,19,24 29:2,5
29:9,15,20 30:2,5,9
30:12,16,19,20,23
OS2 30:20,21
Oscar 9:7
OU 9:10,11,23 10:13
16:3 28:18,23 29:1,8
29:17
outer 7:20 20:24
outs 7:10
outside 15:24
overlap 14:19
Overnight 13:9
overseeing 27:14

██████ 9:13 16:3
21:12 22:2 27:13,22
29:3,12,16 30:12,13

P

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
2:1
p.m 30:25
P8 17:14,15
PA 17:6
page 24:15
part 16:6 19:7
particular 26:13 27:4
pass 5:24 8:1
pass-on 14:12
Patricia 2:13
Patrick 17:7,12,12
patterns 22:7,12
Patty 1:18 12:2 23:8
26:15
Paul 1:18 2:17 13:9
26:24
people 8:18 15:20
16:18
percent 11:14
permission 24:7
permit 20:14
person 26:25
persons 16:15 21:24
perspective 23:6
Petty 9:13 21:12 22:2
27:13,22 29:2,12,16
30:12
phone 24:5,22 25:6,11
physical 19:23
pick 11:16
Ping 13:4
PIW 16:10
place 10:23 18:2
plan 16:25 17:3
planes 20:6
planned 17:10 21:12
planning 7:23 9:25 10:4
10:11 14:20 15:15,17
16:4,6 18:22 19:7,10
19:11,21 22:3,15,18
23:5 25:16
plans 10:14 19:24
point 8:21 10:2 16:10
16:13 21:23 22:7
26:20 28:15
policy 13:14
popping 13:11
Port 4:18
possible 20:11,14
possibly 14:23
preparations 7:18
present 1:20 14:10

22:21
pretty 7:21 8:13,15
preventing 30:8
primarily 3:9,13 5:1
primary 3:4
prior 23:1
probably 4:2
proceeded 6:2 8:17
produced 1:23
prohibitive 15:3
provide 22:6 25:16
provided 1:24
providing 22:11
proximity 6:21
push 13:20
pushed 21:15
pushes 10:9
put 12:14 16:10 19:17
putting 15:20

Q

question 12:9,24 26:24
 28:2 30:3
questions 18:18 23:8
 23:10 26:18
quick 26:21
quite 26:7

R

radar 11:10,13,17 13:2
 13:6
radio 4:19
raft 16:9,22
raise 11:21
ramped 26:7
range 8:15
real 12:3 26:21
really 25:23
reason 16:14
recall 10:3 11:15,25
 13:12,12
receive 22:25
received 5:2,25 7:3,4
 12:19,20 24:7 25:21
 25:21
receiving 22:12
recommended 8:16
record 30:25
recording 3:3
recover 18:12
recovered 18:13 21:20
recurrence 30:8
refuel 17:22 18:5
refueled 18:10
regards 25:7 26:1
regular 25:24
relieve 5:21
relieved 14:11

remaining 23:25
remember 24:13,18
report 6:25
reported 20:25
reporting 7:6
Representative 2:20
requested 8:22
requesting 10:19
required 10:13 22:25
rescue 3:8 5:1 7:22 8:2
 9:14 10:11 20:18,19
 23:5 27:15 28:5 29:6
 29:18
rescuing 20:17
Resolute 22:9 23:23
responded 10:10
response 22:9 24:7
 29:23
responsible 27:16
review 10:14
right 6:8,15,16 12:19
 13:8 14:2,6 15:8,11
 18:15 19:13 23:11,13
 24:12 26:14 27:8 28:4
 28:4,20
risk 7:23
rolled 14:18
room 2:8 4:20
rotate 3:7
running 9:10,10
Ryder 8:25

S

safely 15:4
Safety 1:1,24
SAR 9:25 10:4,12 15:15
 16:25 19:24 26:23
Saturday 14:20,23 15:1
 15:10,16,17 17:3
 18:25 19:1 20:4,11,15
 21:10
scene 10:5 11:4,5 17:20
 17:24 20:9,15,24 22:8
 22:10 23:22,25
school 4:16
search 3:8 4:25 7:22
 9:13 10:11,14 11:10
 11:13 14:9,19 15:17
 16:3,4,5,19,19,22,25
 18:22 19:7,10,11,21
 21:14,16,25 22:7,11
 23:5 24:3,6,8 26:8
 27:15 28:5 29:6,18
searches 7:10 10:8
 21:11 22:3,15
searching 21:23
seas 20:25
sec 28:21

second 8:19 9:10 14:7
 18:20,23 19:4,5,6,22
 19:22 20:1,2,3 28:18
 28:21,22,23 29:1,9
secondary 3:6
sector 4:21 5:10
see 2:25 5:18 10:10
 12:13 17:1 28:22
 29:21 30:22
seeing 11:20 13:10
 20:23
select 16:7
selected 16:8,9
senior 23:18 24:5
sent 7:16 22:19 24:15
separate 27:10,18
Services 1:18 2:14 12:3
set 21:6 28:22 29:1
Seven 2:4
Seventh 1:11 2:23 5:3
severe 7:17
severely 11:18
Sexton 22:9 23:23
ship 6:20 7:14,19 8:21
 12:4,6 13:4,5 16:7,9
 16:14,17,23 21:22
show 25:3
showing 14:23
significant 9:4
sir 3:2 5:16 9:5,12
 11:22 15:12 17:18
 18:11,17 19:9,16,18
 20:20 21:8 23:14
 24:11 27:8 30:2,5,9
situation 4:23
slept 14:12
solid 16:16
Somebody 28:6
soon 20:11
sorties 24:13
south 7:15
southeast 8:22
speak 14:13 26:2,11
speaking 11:25
Specialist 2:5,21 4:16
specifically 13:13
 14:13 15:19 25:7
 27:23
spell 9:6
split 9:20,22 28:13
spoke 11:6,8 18:1
SRUs 16:25
staff 22:20 23:18 24:5
stand 3:13 6:2
stander 4:23,23
start 17:23 19:21
started 14:21
starting 5:18 14:23

stated 11:12 26:22 27:2
Station 8:24 17:5,9 24:1
stationed 4:17
 16:3 30:12
stick 9:2
storm 6:21 7:7,20 11:16
 14:4,21 20:22 21:15
stroke 8:11
suffered 8:10,19
suggestion 30:17
suggestions 30:7
suit 21:20
Sunday 21:14
sunset 23:24 24:2
supervising 27:16
support 15:22
sure 11:14 13:13,17
 20:8,12 28:9
surface 18:3,7 25:18
survival 2:11,14,16,18
 21:20,22
survivors 18:10,12,13
 20:17
suspend 24:8
suspended 24:4,10
suspension 22:18,24
 23:19 24:6

T

tail 26:11
take 28:3,6,12,12
taken 10:23 11:2
talk 11:23 21:6
taped 3:1
targets 13:10
tasked 17:22 22:2
taskers 3:16
team 3:18,20,21 9:19
 26:23
tell 6:17 13:5 21:5 27:12
ten 4:11,14
testi 26:21
testified 26:22 27:2
Thank 27:8 29:19
thing 12:15 25:2
things 13:21 25:4 29:18
think 4:1 7:19 8:13 12:8
 12:24 13:7 14:22
 20:25 21:1 25:4,20,21
 26:5,19,24
thinking 13:8
third 4:16 24:25
thought 9:18,20 14:24
thousand 11:18
three 4:18 5:7,9,15
 16:21 21:8 22:7,14
 23:22 26:2 28:11
Thursday 17:22 18:2

30:13,15 time 2:3,8 7:7 8:7,12,13 11:1 18:6 times 6:14 tomorrow 30:13 top 24:16 total 24:13 TOTE 1:18 2:14 7:6 12:3 22:14 23:20 25:13 tour 4:18 5:11 tracks 13:20 traffic 25:6 training 3:15 4:15 transcriber 2:9 transcript 1:23 Transportation 1:1,24 Trauma 8:25 trying 10:16,18 12:23 25:2,3 Tuesday 1:9 2:2 22:23 23:7,8,10 Tuesday/Wednesday 21:7 tugs 22:14 turned 21:14 two 4:2 5:6 9:2 21:18 25:21 27:9,17,23 28:10,12 type 30:8	Visit 3:20,21 volume 25:25 26:13	0600 6:7,11,14 12:14 14:11
U	W	1
U.S 1:18,21 2:4,17,22 8:9 17:6,16 ultimately 17:2 Um-hum 6:12 12:17 13:16 15:7 27:25 28:19,24 understand 21:18 understanding 28:1 understood 21:17,21 21:23 Uniform 9:8 unit 4:23,25 9:13 unlocated 7:3 unsuccessful 7:12 updates 7:4 22:12 25:15 USCG 1:11 usually 16:18 22:24 25:15	want 13:6 16:1,2 wanted 15:19,19 wasn't 8:12 14:10 25:10 25:15,25 26:3,12 watch 3:13 4:22,23 5:21 5:22,23 6:2,17 8:12 15:5,6,11 17:2 19:3,6 19:22 20:2,3 22:1,1 23:12,16 27:10 28:17 29:11 watches 21:6 26:1 28:22 29:1,14 water 6:24 16:15,18 21:24 way 17:24 we'll 2:8 4:1 12:21 23:11 we're 2:3 4:2 26:17 30:22 we've 15:22 16:17,17 weather 7:21 10:5 14:8 14:15,22 15:2 17:24 20:6,9,14,25 21:15 Webb 1:18 2:17,17 3:23 8:4,6 9:4,15 13:8,9,16 13:19 18:20,22 19:5,7 19:11,14,17,19 20:1 28:4,7,10,15,17,20 Wednesday 22:4 23:12 welcome 29:20 went 14:7,12 16:4 30:24 weren't 7:7 10:4 11:16 17:20 19:9 20:8,12 26:6 winds 14:4 21:1 Windward 8:1 work 28:12 worked 9:1 worker 3:11 working 3:12,14 4:19 12:16 17:23 29:5 wrap 26:17,18,19 wrong 6:10	1 1:5 5:18,21 6:17,18 13:24 29:10 10 11:18 100 11:14 12 8:3 13 1:10 13th 2:2 15 6:23 20:25 1701 2:3 1730 5:22 1736 30:22 1800 5:24 6:7,11,14 12:14 1900 24:4,9 1st 6:10 27:12,19 29:10
	X	2
	Y	2 29:10 30:19 2005 5:14 2008 5:12,14 2010 5:4 2012 5:12 2015 1:5,10 2:3 212-foot 7:14 24 22:25 2nd 6:10 15:6 20:4 27:13,19 29:10
	Z	3
	0	30 7:18 21:1 34 4:8 3rd 15:8
		4
		40 7:15 406 7:2
		5
		5:36 30:25
		6
		6:30 14:11 60 8:21 65 8:23 6th 6:13 21:7 27:17 29:15
		7
		7th 6:13 21:7 27:18 29:15

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: El Faro Incident
Accident No. DCA16MM001
Interview of [REDACTED]
Miami, FL

DATE: 10-13-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 36 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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